the
Ally
guide
CSUN Ally Project

What are the goals of the Ally Project?

- To provide an avenue for students, faculty and staff to visibly demonstrate their support of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ)
- To establish a university-wide network of easily identifiable allies who can provide support, information and assistance to LGBTQ persons within the university
- To provide LGBTQ students, faculty and staff with comfortable access to sensitive and knowledgeable people for information and support
- To educate members of the university community about the needs and concerns of LGBTQ persons
- To foster an atmosphere on campus that supports the academic and professional success of LGBTQ persons, as well as their personal and social growth
- To advance the university’s progress toward a campus climate free of discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identification

Allies don’t have to be experts, just someone who cares about the LGBTQ community. Allies offer support to LGBTQ and questioning students by respecting them, listening to their concerns, and helping them access campus resources.

If you’d like to schedule training for your department or class, contact:

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Email: sarina.loeb@csun.edu

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What is an Ally?

Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia and heterosexual privilege in themselves and others out of a concern for the well-being of LGBTQ people and a belief that heterosexism is a social justice issue.

Allies...
- Refuse to tolerate anti-LGBTQ comments, attitudes, remarks or jokes
- Report all harassment or discriminatory behavior to the appropriate officials
- Do not assume that everyone is heterosexual or cisgender
- Use inclusive, non-gender specific language that does not assume heterosexuality in others

Ways to Be an Ally
- Be a listener
- Be open-minded
- Be willing to talk
- Be inclusive and invite LGBTQ friends to hang out with your friends and family
- Don’t assume that all of your friends and co-workers are straight. Someone close to you could be looking for support in their coming-out process.
- Not making assumptions will give them the space they need
- Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments and jokes are harmful. Let your friends, family and co-workers know that you find them offensive.
- Confront your own prejudices and phobias, even if it is uncomfortable to do so
- Defend your LGBTQ friends against discrimination
- Believe that all people, regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation, should be treated with dignity and respect

(Source: Modified from the Northern Illinois University Safe Zone Ally Handbook)
Coming Out

Refers to the process by which one accepts his or her sexuality/gender identity (to “come out” to one’s self). Also, it refers to the process by which one shares one’s sexuality/gender identity with others (to “come out” to friends, etc.).

Tips for Coming Out

- Be patient with yourself. It’s not necessary to tell everyone at once. Come out when you are ready.
- Start small. It can be easier to start by telling friends than by telling family.
- Find allies in your family. If you think a brother or sister will be easier to tell, start there.
- Develop a support network of friends who are accepting and supportive.
- Be positive. When you come out to someone, you set the tone.
- Use resources or find a mentor to talk to.
- Be patient with others. Some people take longer to digest or accept the information presented to them than others. Realize that they may need some time to adjust.
- Assess the situation. If you’re unsure of your own sexual orientation or gender identity, find someone who can help support you during this time.
- Ask LGBTQ friends to share their coming out stories.
- Refer parents and friends to Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) or other resources that might help.
- Be prepared for both positive and negative reactions.

Tips for When Someone Comes Out to You

- Be patient. Allow them to tell you at their own pace. Let them determine what is needed.
- Commit yourself as an ally. Let them know that you are accepting.
- Don’t push. A person who is coming out may have a hard time talking about it. Don’t force them to disclose anything.
- Keep their confidence and respect their privacy.
- Acknowledge the risk they took by coming out to you. Compliment their courage.
- Don’t minimize the importance of what they did by saying, “It doesn’t matter to me.” Instead say, “Thank you for trusting me.” Or, “It doesn’t change how I feel about you.” Or discuss how it might change things in positive way.
- Ask, “How can I support you?”
- Don’t ask: Are you hot for me? What made you this way? Is it just a phase?

(Source: http://sal.usc.edu/lgbt/coming-out)

Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation

What’s the Difference?

What is the difference between sex and gender?

Sex is strictly biological. It is the physical body. Gender encompasses biological, cognitive and social aspects of a human being, including identity, expression and the expectations of others. Because gender and sex are not the same thing, it is possible for a person’s sex and gender to disagree.

What is gender identity?

Gender identity is a primary aspect of gender. It is how a person sees and feels about him- or herself. For most people, gender identity corresponds with physical sex. For some, the two are not in alignment. People whose gender identity and physical sex do not agree are often called transgender.

Does this have anything to do with sexual orientation?

Sexual orientation refers to a person’s attractions. Gender identity refers to who a person believes themselves to be. Transgender people can have any sexual orientation. It is also possible for sexual attraction to change after transition. It is best not to put too much importance on labels such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, straight, etc.

(Source: http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com)
The term transgender refers to a number of identities (Transman, Transwoman, genderqueer, agender, bigender, two spirit, etc), including those who do and do not go through Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and/or surgeries. The term continues to develop and evolve, and as a result no longer includes cross dressers, drag performers or intersex persons under the transgender umbrella. It is always important to respect and use the terms the individual uses to self-identify.

**How do I talk about transgender people?**

When referring to a transgender person, you should always use the person’s preferred gender pronoun (he/she/his/hers) and name. If you’re uncertain which pronoun is appropriate for a person, you should respectfully ask that person rather than make an assumption.

When writing about transgender people, use “transgender,” and not “transgendered,” which is considered offensive and grammatically incorrect.

Incorrect: “Max is transgendered.” This would be the same as saying, “Max is maled.”
Correct: “Max is transgender.” Or, “Max is a transgender man.”

Keep in mind that “transgender” should always be used as an adjective, never as a noun.

Transphobia: The fear or hatred of transgender people or people who do not meet society’s gender role expectations. Transphobia is closely linked with homophobia and biphobia.

**Words That Are Transphobic and Why?**

“You’re such a Tranny.”

Calling someone a Tranny, whether they identify as transgender or not is offensive. This may be a term people within the community use for themselves (though this is rarely the case), but should not be said as a joke or without a person’s consent.

**Using the wrong pronouns or making assumptions about others’ gender identity**

It is important to respect the names and pronouns people prefer. If you are not sure, ask, “What are your preferred pronouns?”

“That person doesn’t really look like a man/woman.”

What does a man or woman really look like? There is no one way to look like a man or a woman. It should also not be assumed that all Transmen want or have to strive to be masculine or that Transwomen should be feminine. Gender presentation is fluid and we should support all the ways people choose to present their gender.

“Why would you transition if you are going to be gay?”

Gender identity and sexual orientation are two separate aspects of one’s identity. This question demonstrates how heterosexual identity is more valued in our society and reinforces homophobia and heterosexism.

Calling someone “it” or “He/She” is demeaning and does not validate their identity or respect them as a person.

“Why is your REAL Name? I mean the one you were given at birth?”

Asking this question implies that the person’s chosen name and gender identity are not “real.” It is important to respect people’s choices to share or not share personal information.

**So why do we say “cisgender” instead of “non-transgender?”**

Cisgender: A person who feels comfortable with their gender identity and gender expression based upon their physical sex. To put this simply, this term is the opposite of the transgender and represents those who are not transgender.

Referring to cisgender people as “non-transgender” implies that cisgender people are the default and that being transgender is abnormal. Many people have said “transgender people” and “normal people,” but when we say “cisgender” and “transgender” neither is implied as more normal than the other.

Cisgender Privilege Checklist

1. It is unlikely that I will be ostracized by my family and friends, fired from my job, evicted from my home, given substandard medical care, suffer violent or sexual abuse, ridiculed by the media, or preached against by religious organizations simply because of my professed identity or perceived incongruent gendered behaviors or characteristics.
2. I can be confident that people will not call me by a different name or use improper pronouns.
3. I never suffered the indignation of "holding it", when both functional and unoccupied public restrooms are available. In fact, I don’t need to be concerned about public facilities segregated by sex.
4. I never grieve about my lost childhood and adolescence because I was born the opposite sex.
5. I never worry about potential lovers shifting instantly from amorous to disdain and even violence because of my genitals.
6. I am unlikely to be questioned about my genitals, even less likely to be touched inappropriately or asked to see them.
7. It is unlikely that I would risk my health by avoiding the medical profession for fear of discovery.
8. I never considered hiding my body parts by binding or tucking.
9. I can’t imagine spending months and $1000s of dollars on a therapist so they can tell me something I already knew.
10. If I am physically healthy, I don’t think about having a hysterectomy, a mastectomy, massive hair removal, contra hormone therapy, vocal surgery, facial reassignment surgery, or genital reassignment surgery.
11. I have a better chance of reaching old age without taking my own life.
12. At my funeral, it is unlikely that my family would present me crossdressed against my living wishes.
13. I never worry about passing gender wise. I am oblivious to the consequences of someone failing to do so, and consequently losing my cisgender (non transgender) privilege. In fact, I have the privilege of being completely unaware of my own cisgender privilege.

How Homophobia Also Hurts Heterosexuals

1. Homophobia prevents heterosexuals from forming close, intimate relationships with members of their own sex, for fear of being perceived as LGBQ.
2. Homophobia locks people into rigid gender-based roles that inhibit creativity and self-expression.
3. Homophobia is often used to stigmatize homosexuals, those perceived or labeled by others to be LGBQ, children of LGBQ parents, parents of LGBQ children, and friends of LGBQ individuals.
4. Homophobia is one cause of premature sexual involvment, which increases the chance of teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Young people of all sexual identities are often pressured to become heterosexually active to prove to themselves and others that they are “normal.”
5. Homophobia prevents some LGBQ people from developing an authentic self-identity.
6. Homophobia prevents appreciation of other types of diversity, making it unsafe for everyone, because each person has unique traits not considered mainstream or dominant. We are all diminished when any one of us is demeaned.

Homophobia & Heterosexism

Homophobia: The fear, hatred or intolerance of people who identify or are perceived as lesbians or gay men, including the fear of being seen as lesbian or gay yourself. Homophobic behavior can range from telling jokes about lesbians and gay men, to verbal abuse, to acts of physical violence.

By challenging homophobia, people are not only fighting oppression from specific groups of people, but are also striving for a society that accepts and celebrates the differences in all of us.

Heterosexism: The assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to other sexualities. Usually used to the advantage of the group in power, any attitude, action, or practice – backed by an institutional power – which subordinates people because of their alternative sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Examples of Heterosexual Privilege

- As a heterosexual, I am privileged to be able to be free of fear while walking across campus holding my girlfriend’s or boyfriend’s hand.
- As a heterosexual, I am privileged to be able to talk freely about my relationships with my roommates, friends and family.
- As a heterosexual, I am privileged to walk this campus without fear of physical or verbal harm based solely on my sexual identity.
- As a heterosexual, I am privileged that I am a member of the dominant culture and I MAY CHOOSE TO BE AN ALLY for gay/lesbian/bisexual students.

(Source: http://queersunited.blogspot.com/2008/08/cisgender-privilege-checklist.html)
(Source from UCR LGBT Resource Center)
Bisexuality

Bisexual: An individual who is physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to men and women. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference of one gender over others.

Bisexual women and men cannot be defined by their partner or potential partner, so are rendered invisible within the either/or heterosexual framework. This invisibility (biphobia) is one of the most challenging aspects of a bisexual identity.

What Does Biphobia Look Like?

- Assuming that everyone you meet is either straight or gay
- Expecting a bisexual to identify as heterosexual when coupled with the opposite gender/sex
- Believing bisexuals spread AIDS/HIV and other STDs to heterosexuals
- Thinking bisexual people haven’t made up their minds
- Assuming a bisexual person would want to fulfill your sexual fantasies or curiosities
- Assuming bisexuals would be willing to “pass” as anything other than bisexual
- Automatically assuming romantic couplings of two women are lesbian, or two men are gay, or a man and a woman are heterosexual
- Using the terms “phase” or “stage” or “confused” or “fence-sitter” to refer to bisexuals
- Feeling that you can’t trust a bisexual because they aren’t really gay or lesbian, or aren’t really heterosexual
- Thinking that people identify as bisexual because it’s “trendy”

Queer

An umbrella term for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community

Queer has been used as...

A political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates breaking binary thinking by recognizing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid.

A simple label to explain a complex set of non-normative sexualities, genders and behaviors. It is an alternative to more static identity categories, such as “gay.”

It is a fluid label, as opposed to a solid label, one that only requires us to acknowledge that we’re different without specifying how or in what context. It is also a concise word that people may use if they do not feel like shifting their language along with their ever-evolving gender, politics and/or sexuality.

Isn’t queer offensive?

For many years, the term queer has been used as an insult to refer to anyone who is seen outside of society’s heterosexual and/or gender “norms” as strange. In response, many LGBT people of earlier generations do not feel comfortable identifying with queer. In recent years, the term queer has been reclaimed, most commonly, by younger members of the LGBT community.

(Source: http://www.biresource.org)

Bisexual pride flag

(Source: http://www.biresource.org)
Additional LGBTQ Terminology

Please note that language is continually changing and it is important to use the term that the individual uses to self-identify. This is by no means an exhaustive list of terminology used in the queer community.

**LGBTIQQ**
An abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and questioning community.

**Homosexual**
An outdated clinical term once considered a mental disorder in the Diagnostics and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) that was removed in 1973. A term once used to describe a person who is sexually and emotionally attracted to the same-sex.

**Heterosexual**
A term used to describe a person who is sexually and emotionally attracted to the opposite-sex, i.e. straight.

**Pansexual**
A person who is attracted to all or many gender expressions. The concept of pansexuality deliberately rejects the gender binary, as pansexual people are open to relationships with people who do not identify as strictly men or women.

**Intersex**
A term used for those born with chromosomes or traits that are not associated with the “standard” male or female body. While those who are within the intersex community may have an additional identity that falls within the transgender umbrella, intersex itself doesn’t fall within the umbrella.

**Genderqueer**
A person who does not conform to the traditional sex-gender binary and displays both masculine and feminine characteristics in self-presentation. A term used by some individuals who identify as neither entirely male nor entirely female, between genders or beyond genders.

**Asexual**
Someone who does not experience sexual attraction. Asexuality is different from celibacy. Asexual people may be in romantic relationships and engage in sexual behaviors for the pleasure of their partner.

LGBTQ Peer Mentor Program
The LGBTQ Peer Mentors are CSUN students (not counselors) who want to help you throughout your journey here at CSUN. They offer support, encouragement and resources as you explore your personal and academic interests and find your own sense of community and identity.

**Ally Project**
The CSUN Ally Project provides LGBTQ awareness trainings to the CSUN campus community and creates visible allies across campus. After attending a workshop/training, allies will receive a sticker or button to display as support for the LGBTQ community.

**Tuesday Talks**
A weekly LGBTQ discussion group that provides a safe space for students to share experiences and discuss topics facing the LGBTQ community. Topics may include: bisexuality, queer people of color, relationships, sex, gender identity, etc. Topics will be chosen by participants in attendance. Allies are welcome!

**LGBTQ Coffee Nights**
A weekly event for students to socialize and connect with each other.

**LGBTQ Media Library**
CSUN students can check out books, DVDs and magazines on LGBTQ related topics.

The Pride Center is located in the University Student Union adjacent to the Student Recreation Center.

Monday through Thursday: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Friday: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
*Hours subject to change during summer and winter.

(818) 677-4355  
pride@csun.edu  
pride.csun.edu

Pride Center Resources

Mission: The Pride Center supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and questioning students, faculty and staff through programming and educational outreach to improve the campus climate for LGBTQ individuals, as well as advocate for the respect and safety of all members of the campus community.
Additional CSUN Resources

Queer Studies Program
Under the College of Humanities, the Queer Studies Program (offered as a minor) focuses on histories, contemporary experiences, and community-based knowledge of LGBTQ people, and others who occupy non-heterosexist, and non-normative gender positionalities.

Queer Studies Coordinator:
Greg Knotts (greg.knotts@csun.edu):
Sierra Hall 194 (Office of Interdisciplinary Studies)
(818) 677-6762
http://www.csun.edu/qs

Klotz Student Health Center
Klotz physicians are board-certified in family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics, sport medicine, gynecology and a variety of other areas. It is also home to specialists in physical therapy, chiropractic services, massage therapy, optometry, podiatry, dentistry, substance use, and women’s and men’s health.

If your alcohol or substance use is becoming a concern or if setting boundaries around friends who use drugs and/or alcohol is difficult for you, consider speaking confidentially to a trained professional. Janis Martin, wellness coach, is available for confidential appointments at the Klotz Student Health Center.

Phone number: (818) 677-3636
http://www.csun.edu/StudentHealthCenter

University Counseling Services (UCS)
UCS provides a variety of free services, including online assessments, personal counseling, group counseling (including LGBT support group) and consultation.

Bayramian Hall 520
(818) 677-2366
http://www.csun.edu/counseling

CSUN Help Line
A public crisis intervention, support and referral service provided in conjunction with CSUN University Counseling Services and Associated Students, Inc. Help Line is a team of telephone crisis response volunteers primarily serving the CSUN campus and the San Fernando Valley community.

Sunday through Thursday: 6 p.m. to Midnight
Friday and Saturday: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.
(818) 349-HELP (4357)

Off-Campus Resources

Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center
The L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center provides a broad array of services for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, welcoming nearly a quarter-million client visits from ethnically diverse youth and adults each year.

Through its Jeffrey Goodman Special Care Clinic and on-site pharmacy, the Center offers free and low-cost health, mental health, HIV/AIDS medical care and HIV/AIDS testing and prevention. The Center also offers legal, social, cultural, and educational services, with unique programs for seniors, families and youth, including a 24-bed transitional program for homeless youth.

1625 N. Schrader Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90028-6213
(323) 993-7400
www.laglc.org

Trevor Project
The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth.

24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (866) 488-7386
www.thetrevorproject.org

Los Angeles Gender Center
The Los Angeles Gender Center provides an environment of safety, support and understanding for exploring gender and sexuality. The Center includes eight experienced therapists who specialize in gender identity, transgender, gender expression, sexual orientation, sexuality, relationships and intimacy. We assist adults, adolescents, children and their families with facing the challenges and embracing the enrichment of exploring gender and sexuality.

(310) 475-8880
staff@lagendercenter.com.
http://www.lagendercenter.com

AIDS Project Los Angeles
AIDS Project Los Angeles is dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by HIV disease, reducing the incidence of HIV infection, and advocating for fair and effective HIV-related public policy.

611 South Kingsley Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90005
(213) 201-1600
http://www.apla.org